



COVID 19 and advice for patients on Immune-suppressing medications

IF YOU ARE WELL

There is no evidence to suggest that WELL patients, without fever or signs of infection should change or stop any of their regular prescribed medications including:

- Usual DMARDs (methotrexate, hydroxychloroquine, leflunomide, mycophenolate, azathioprine, sulfasalazine)
- Biologics (bDMARDs) eg. etanercept, adalimumab etc or targeted DMARDs (tDMARDs) eg. tofacitinib, baricitinib
- Anti-inflammatories (ibuprofen, meloxicam, celecoxib etc)
- Steroids (prednisone or prednisolone)

If you are on a biologic medication and someone close to you is proven to have COVID infection, talk to your GP or rheumatologist about about delaying your next dose.

We would encourage our patients to get the annual Flu vaccination when available.

We would also recommend following general public health advice including:

- Frequent handwashing
 - before eating and after being out in general community areas (schools, shops, after touching lifts, escalators, shopping trolleys etc)
 - 20 seconds with soap and water (hand sanitiser if this is not available)
- Sneeze / cough into a disposable tissue or your elbow and then wash your hands
- Limit touching your face
- Sanitise your phone, computer and work surfaces regularly
- Avoid crowds and sick people (eg concerts, church services, sporting events, etc)

IF YOU GET SICK

We recommend patients seek medical advice from either their usual general practitioner or hospital emergency department.

If you have fever or cough, we suggest you **CALL FIRST** and tell them you are on immunosuppressive medications.

If you are an older adult with a chronic illness or you are taking medications that affect your immune system you may be at a higher risk of more serious COVID-19 disease. If you are at increased risk, it is especially important to take actions to reduce your risk of exposure. If you think you have been exposed or have developed symptoms, you should also contact your doctor early in the course of your illness, even if it is mild, and let them know if you are taking immune-suppressing drugs.

MEDICATIONS

Currently, there is no need to stockpile medications as Australian medications are sourced widely.

This is GENERAL advice. If patients have specific questions about their situation, they should discuss this with their specialist.

For the latest advice, information and resources, please refer to Department of Health.
(<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources>)

National Coronavirus Health Information Line 1800 020 080 – operates 24 hours, seven days a week.

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